

Council

Minutes

Thursday, 20 April 2017 at 19:00

PRESENT :

His Worship the Mayor Councillor Bird (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Annison, Bensly, Borg, Carpenter, B Coleman, M Coleman, Connell, Davis, Fairhead, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, A Grey, K Grey, Hacon, Hammond, Hanton, Jeal, Jones, Lawn, Mavroudis, Myers, Plant, Pratt, Reynolds, Robinson-Payne, Smith, Stenhouse, Thirtle, Wainwright, Walch, Walker, Waters-Bunn, Weymouth, Williamson and Wright.

Also in attendance :-

Mrs S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Mrs J Beck (Director of Customer Services), Mr R Read (Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods), Mrs K Watts (Transformation Programme Manager), Mr D Johnson (Monitoring Officer), and Mr R Hodds (Corporate Governance Manager).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cutting and Rodwell.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest declared at the meeting.

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Committee considered the following question from Mr J Cannell, President Great Yarmouth and District TUC :-

"In the light of the decision by the local Conservative MP to decline an invitation from Great Yarmouth Borough Council to attend a public meeting on the impact of Universal Credit, when is Great Yarmouth Borough Council going to hold the public meeting to discuss the impact of the Governments Universal Credit trial?"

The Leader reported that the Council are regularly engaged in meetings with interested Stakeholders regarding the impact of Universal Credit. The Universal Credit system is administered by the DWP and the Council facilitates fortnightly meetings with Job Centre Plus and advise agencies to highlight local issues and in addition Great Yarmouth staff meet with the Local Authority Engagement Group centrally to feedback progress. The Council is dedicated to trying to assist with the implementation of Universal Credit and Council Officers have regular attendance at the Eastern Landlords association meetings and provide feedback for all sectors.

DWP organise a number of early engagement workshops at the beginning of the Universal Credit roll out and a formal request will be made by the Council for DWP to repeat this process with an opportunity to update on the current situation. The Universal Credit update enquiry has received verbal feedback at a session with Lord Freud and the written responses which were provided included Great Yarmouth are currently being pulled together into a report but as yet there is no publication date set.

Great Yarmouth were also interviewed separately regarding the Great Yarmouth specific issues and we have requested a copy of that report once finalised. When this report is ready we will bring it forward to a public meeting either at the Policy and Resources Committee or Full Council.

The motion was to "call upon this Council to write to Brandon Lewis MP and request that he attends a Public meeting (to be arranged) where agencies and those affected are encouraged to voice their own experience of this new benefit". The Council did write to Brandon Lewis to make this request, and he offered to help with individual cases where Councillors feel unable to help.

There is no requirement for the Council to hold a separate Public meeting from all the meetings it currently holds which are in public.

In accordance with the Constitution, Mr Cannell was then entitled to ask a supplementary question as follows :-

" Have you looked at the economic effect Universal Credit is having on the Borough, and the decline on Businesses and how many agencies have you spoken with including whether any contact has been made with the TUC Unemployed Workers Centre?"

In response the Leader reported that the effect on the Borough was unknown

specifically linked to Universal Credit. He stated that we had seen an upturn in business operation throughout the Borough. The Leader stated that the Council is dealing with Universal Credit on a one to one basis and he felt that it was wrong of the TUC to call a Public meeting as he felt many of the Universal Credit issues could be dealt with on a individual basis by Officers of the Council.

4 MINUTES

The Mayor presented the Council minutes of the meeting held on the 21 February 2017.

Proposer : Councillor Plant

Seconded : Councillor B Coleman

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 21 February 2017 be confirmed.

CARRIED

5 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

a) Sentinel Leisure Trust

Council was advised that Councillor Stenhouse and Walch had resigned from the above trust and Members were asked to consider the appointment of replacements to this Trust.

Proposer : Councillor Plant

Seconded : Councillor Carpenter

That consideration of the appointment of replacements to the Sentinel Leisure trust be deferred until the Council meeting on the 16 May 2017.

CARRIED

6 SERVICE COMMITTEES - DECISIONS LIST FOR THE PERIOD 7 FEBRUARY 2017 TO 11 APRIL 2017

Council received for information the decision list for Service Committees for the period 7 February to 12 April 2017.

Proposer : Councillor Plant

Seconded : Councillor Reynolds

That the Service Committees decision list for the period 7 February to 12 April 2017 be received.

CARRIED

7 THANKS TO MAYOR

The Leader recorded his thanks and appreciation to his Worship the Mayor in his role as Chairman of the Council for the 2016/17 Municipal Year. The Leaders commented were fully endorsed by the Council.

In response, his Worship the Mayor recorded his thanks to all Members for their support during his year as Chairman of the Council.

The meeting ended at: 19:18